

Town of Lunenburg Park Commission

Karin Menard, Chair
Chris Sullivan, Vice Chair
Marianne Mascari, Member
Anita Scheipers, Member
Colleen Shapiro, Member



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Approved 7/20/25

Park Commission Meeting Minutes
Ritter Building, Upper Conference Room, 960 Massachusetts Ave.
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Anita Scheipers, Vice-Chair Colleen Shapiro, Clerk Karin Menard, Member Chris Sullivan, Member Marianne Mascari

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Facilities Director Chris Ruth, Recreation Director Angela Clement

OPEN MEETING

Chair Anita Scheipers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Chair Anita Scheipers informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded and would be uploaded to YouTube after the meeting. She explained that the agenda listed topics that may be discussed, but not all items may be addressed, and other items not listed could be brought up as permitted by open meeting law.

REORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION FOR POSITIONS OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, AND CLERK

C. Shapiro moved to nominate Karin Menard as the Chair of the Park Commission effective immediately. Seconded by C. Sullivan. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

K. Menard moved to nominate Chris Sullivan as the Vice-Chair of the Park Commission effective immediately. Seconded by C. Sullivan. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

K. Menard stated that the Park Commission does not need a Clerk because there is an incoming Recording Clerk to assist with its minutes. The Commission's consensus was not to move forward with nominating a Clerk.

A. Scheipers handed the meeting over to K. Menard.

FACILITIES DIRECTOR UPDATE

Chris Ruth stated that a former resident purchased two benches for Veterans Park. C. Ruth stated that the benches that are currently installed were in memory of the former resident's mother and one bench for his grandfather. C. Ruth stated that the resident has asked the Town to replace the wood on the benches and will pay for the repairs. C. Ruth stated that all six benches at the Park are deteriorating, and he estimates that the costs of repairing all the benches would be \$1,500. C. Ruth stated that he recommends going with composite material instead of wood. C. Ruth presented the Commission with colors to choose from.

A. Scheipers asked if the donation by the former resident would have to be approved by the Select Board. C. Ruth agreed that it would need to be approved by the Select Board.

K. Menard stated that a high school senior volunteered recently to inventory all portions of Veterans Park. K. Menard stated that she will make sure to upload the files so that the Commission can view them in the future. The Commission informally decided on the Havana Gold color for the renovated benches at Veterans Park, which was presented to them by C. Ruth.

C. Ruth stated that the Wallace Park merry-go-round was damaged by members of the public. C. Ruth stated that the condition of the merry-go-round was discussed on social media groups. He stated that he assessed the condition and did not find any safety issues or sharp edges. C. Ruth said that one of the handles has been stolen, and one of the handles is at DPW and will be welded back together. C. Ruth stated that a resident said that an accessible swing was removed five years ago. C. Ruth stated that replacing the two rails and the swing is going to cost \$3,050.72, and the price will increase by July 1, 2025.

K. Menard stated that she believes the entire structure should be removed due to safety issues and continued maintenance. C. Ruth stated that removing the entire structure would cost significantly more money than the proposed repairs, due to bringing in heavy equipment and demolition equipment to dismantle the concrete base. K. Menard suggested that an inexpensive security camera be installed to make sure that the equipment doesn't get stolen or vandalized. C. Ruth stated that he would have to confirm the legality of the request.

K. Menard asked what the funding source would be for the proposed repairs. Mr. Ruth said it would have to come from the revolving fund and that there are funds available.

A. Scheipers moved to allocate \$3,050.72 for the proposed equipment to repair the swing and the merry-go-round at Wallace Park. Seconded by C. Shapiro. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

C. Ruth stated that he thought a company that was identified to do the Wallace Park tennis court renovation was on the State contract list. He stated that the vendor is not correctly listed on the State list. C. Ruth stated that the work must now go out to bid for procurement for three weeks. C. Ruth stated that the work is not expected to be completed by September, unless another

vendor has a lower bid. C. Ruth stated that the prior repair was not done correctly. K. Menard recommended routine inspections of the surface in the future. A. Clement stated that the courts could be restriped to allow for pickleball, but she recommends porta-potties by the court. A. Clement stated that programming could be run if the courts were used for pickleball. C. Ruth stated that if it were striped for pickleball, residents would have to bring their portable nets.

K. Menard suggested that C. Ruth and A. Clement work with the Library to have pickleball equipment and nets loaned out to residents. C. Ruth suggested that signage could be made to state the availability of loaning out pickleball equipment at the Library. K. Menard suggested that the Ledger could be notified once the repairs are made to advertise the improvements.

C. Sullivan asked if there could be any anticipated noise due to the proposed pickleball courts. C. Ruth didn't foresee any issues and recommends that at least one basketball court be available for residents. C. Ruth proposed that both courts be striped for pickleball. C. Ruth recommends that if the Town organizes programming, one court would be available for non-programming use. A. Clement agreed with C. Ruth.

C. Ruth stated that the original contractor, who was planning to handle the weeds at the Town Beach, was not working out. C. Ruth stated that the new plan is to use diver-assisted suction harvesting from a pontoon boat. C. Ruth stated that he is working with a consultant to start the permitting process. C. Ruth stated that the consultant will be in the water tomorrow to determine what weeds are present and what types of weeds are there. C. Ruth stated that the plan is to have three and a half days of a contractor vacuuming weeds and then reassessing to see if there are enough funds in the capital account to move forward with more work. C. Ruth stated that portions of the Town Beach may not be open while the work is occurring. C. Ruth stated that the permits are valid for five years.

RECREATION DIRECTOR UPDATE

A. Clement stated that the Town Beach will be open for swimming on June 23, 2025. She stated that there will be staff training from June 20th through June 22nd. A. Clement stated that Jared, the new Beach Director, has been part of the staff for several years. A. Clement stated that the lifeguarding staff is fully hired for the season. A. Clement stated that swimming lessons will occur one at a time due to only having one returning lifeguard who has done swimming lessons before. A. Clement stated that afternoon sessions are available, but have not received a lot of interest so far. A. Clement stated that swimming lessons will not begin until the week of June 30th. A. Clement stated that she will ask the Town Manager to send out an email notification to Town staff to advertise employee rates for beach use. K. Menard described the registration system, called My Rec, to M. Mascari.

A. Clement stated that the first week of summer programming is the week of June 23rd, and it's almost fully enrolled for Snapology. K. Menard asked about there being a gap in programming

between Snapology and Soccer camp from 12:00 – 12:30 p.m. A. Clement stated that she is willing to watch the children doing both activities and walk the campers over to the next program at 12:30 p.m. A. Clement stated that multi-sport programming is also available.

A. Clement stated that due to the vacancy in the building, additional Fall programming can occur now that there is more space. K. Menard recommended to A. Clement that she apply for funding through the Lunenburg Cultural Council.

C. Sullivan thanked A. Clement for her efforts in organizing the Lunenburg Vendor Fair.

MARSHALL PARK PROJECT: NEXT STEPS – REGARDING SEPTIC SYSTEM, STATUS OF DESIGN, FUTURE PRESENTATION OF FUNDING REQUESTS

A. Scheipers had a conversation with the Town Manager after the May Town Meeting in terms of continuing design work for Marshall Park. A. Scheipers stated that the Town Manager said that the Commission should spend down any remaining allocated funding to finalize design plans. A. Scheipers contacted Skanska and RDLA requesting an estimate of a full and small design for Marshall Park.

Mr. Ruth stated that the current Board of Health may be willing to allow for sewer connections at Marshall Park. Mr. Ruth stated that it may free up additional funds; however, he said that for the full bathroom installation, it would require additional funding. Mr. Ruth stated that some of the currently allocated funds are ARPA funds and must be spent down. A. Scheipers stated that she determined that there is just under \$100,000 left that was appropriated for Marshall Park. A. Scheipers stated that she had conversations with representatives from Skanska and RDLA, and they did not believe it would make sense to pursue adding a bathroom facility because it would cause a lot of redesigning that may need to be done. A. Scheipers stated that Skanska and RDLA estimated that a new updated plan could be done with the remaining appropriated funds and aim for the smaller project (Phase 1+).

A. Scheipers stated that the Town Manager encouraged the Commission to bring forward Phase 1+ to the Fall Town Meeting. A. Scheipers described Phase 1+ as major improvements, including bringing utilities in from Massachusetts Avenue, creating a larger parking and driveway entrance, adding basketball and pickleball courts, adding an ADA accessible playground, and adding a pavilion/concession stand facility.

A. Scheipers, K. Menard, and C. Shapiro agreed that if the Town Manager believes bringing Phase 1+ to Fall Town Meeting is the correct strategy, they would support it. C. Sullivan stated that he believed the phased approach is too piecemeal. The Commission discussed what occurred at the May Town Meeting and the Marshall Park article not passing. K. Menard stated that due to the override vote, the Marshall Park article may not have had enough support during the Town Meeting. K. Menard stated that it may be challenging to justify bringing the entire project back

to Town Meeting in the Fall, and that a phased approach may be better. C. Sullivan stated that he believes it could make sense to bring forth both Phase 1+ and the full project to the future Town Meeting and prioritize Phase 1+ as the first article being presented. A. Scheipers stated that it may not be legally possible. K. Menard stated that she is concerned with bringing Phase 1+ to Fall Town Meeting and having to wait for the debt exclusion ballot question for the project in May 2026. A. Scheipers stated that the Commission should ask the Town Manager to produce a strategy to fund Phase 1+ or the entire project.

C. Sullivan stated that he is concerned with the phased approach, because Phase 1+ does not address any renovations to the baseball/softball fields. C. Sullivan stated that the fields will continue to significantly flood. A. Scheipers stated that the fields are a smaller user group and that Phase 1+ addresses more user groups and increases access and parking to the existing facilities.

The Commission decided to speak with members of Skanska and RDLA to discuss strategies to either bring Phase 1+ to Fall Town Meeting or wait to bring the full project to either Fall Town Meeting or May Town Meeting in 2026.

K. Menard stated that she and A. Scheipers have been meeting with representatives from Skanska and RDLA periodically to discuss the project. A. Scheipers stated that she is willing to let other Commissioners be responsible for meeting with the representatives. K. Menard stated that her term expires in less than a year. She stated that she recommends another Board member to take her place, to meet with the representatives consistently. C. Sullivan stated that he is willing to meet with the representatives and to take the place of A. Scheipers. A. Scheipers stated that she won't be attending the design team meetings anymore, but will be available for assistance with the financial portion of the project.

A. Scheipers said she will communicate with the design team and will tell them the Commission agrees to spend down the remaining funds on the design plans. A. Scheipers stated that she will reach out to the Finance Director to make sure there are enough funds through ARPA.

K. Menard stated that organizers of the skate park at Marshall Park have asked to present their 3D Model to the Parks Commission at a future meeting.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

K. Menard tabled the approval of the meeting minutes until the next meeting.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT

K. Menard stated that a former Commissioner was the Open Space Committee representative; she stated that there is now a vacancy, and it must be appointed by the Commission.

K. Menard moved to appoint Colleen Shapiro as the Park Commission representative for the Open Space Committee, effective immediately. Seconded by A. Scheipers. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

NEW RECORDING CLERK: ANTHONY SENESI

K. Menard stated that Anthony Senesi was recently appointed by the Select Board to be the Park Commission Recording Clerk/Secretary.

CHAIR UPDATES

K. Menard recommended that the Park Commission have a meeting with the representatives of the skate park to discuss the 3D models and renderings. The Commission informally agreed.

K. Menard recommended that the Park Commission have a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss in-depth the financials of the Recreation Department and the Facilities Department because of the small source of revenue that is being generated and the large amount of funding being spent. A. Scheipers agrees that the Town Manager should be invited to discuss the financial situation of the Recreation Department. K. Menard stated that she believed hiring a full-time Recreation Director would assist with having the Recreation Department be entirely self-funded and self-sufficient regarding revenue. A. Scheipers stated that she sent out a survey to surrounding communities regarding their fee structure for recreation programming and received a 30% response rate. K. Menard stated that she recommends meeting with the Town Manager and Finance Director as early as August to determine program fee rates. C. Sullivan stated that the Commission should vote on the new rates to give enough time for user groups to advertise and adjust.

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES

No updates. No public comments.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

The Commission is meeting next on July 30, 2025. The Commission will meet on August 20, 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

C. Sullivan moved to adjourn. Seconded by C. Shapiro. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anthony Senesi,
Recording Clerk

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